

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached drawing sheet marked REPLACEMENT SHEET includes changes to Fig. 2. Specifically, Fig. 2 now includes a rendering of surface S1 of optical element A from a different angle.

Attachments: One (1) drawing sheet marked REPLACEMENT SHEET including Fig. 2.

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Amendment in reply to the Office Action mailed March 17, 2006.

As an initial matter, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of the allowability of the subject matter of claims 3 and 11. At least because Applicants believe that independent claim 1, as amended, is patentable over the cited references, Applicants have not written the subject matter of claims 3 and 11 into independent form at this time.

By this Amendment, Applicants amend the title, amend Fig. 2, and amend claim 1. The originally-filed specification, drawings, and claims fully support the subject matter of these amendments. No new matter has been introduced.

Claims 1-16 are pending in this application. Claim 1 is the sole independent claim.

On page 2 of the Office Action, the drawings were objected to for allegedly not disclosing "ring-shaped zones." Applicants have amended Fig. 2 to include an exemplary depiction of these "ring-shaped zones" that is fully supported by the specification, for example, by Table 1 at page 38 of the specification. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the drawing objection.

On page 3 of the Office Action, the title was objected to. Applicants have amended the title. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the title.

On pages 3-5 of the Office Action, claims 1, 4-7, 9, 12, and 14-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,947,368 B2 to Hendricks et al. ("Hendricks"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Hendricks does not disclose or suggest the claimed invention. For example, independent claim 1 recites an objective lens unit for converging a light flux onto an information recording plane of an optical information recording medium in an optical pickup apparatus including, among other aspects, "each of the first and second optical elements having a optical functional section and a flange section solidly formed around the optical functional section." Hendricks does not disclose at least these aspects of the claimed invention either alone or in combination with the other aspects of the claimed invention.

The Office Action asserts that objective lens 12, modifier 14, and mounting 13 of Hendricks correspond to the first optical element, the second optical element, and the flange section of the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully disagree. Even assuming *arguendo* that objective lens 12 and modifier 14 correspond to the first and second optical elements, mounting 13 cannot correspond to the claimed flange section at least because mounting 13 is separate from, and thus not solidly formed with either objective lens 12 or modifier 14 as set forth in independent claim 1.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 102(e) rejection based on Hendricks.

On pages 5-7 of the Office Action, claims 2, 8, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hendricks in view of the alleged admitted prior art, and claim 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable

over Hendricks in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,781,943 B2 to Saito ("Saito"). At least because neither the alleged admitted prior art nor Saito are cited as remedying the aforementioned deficiencies of Hendricks, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 103(a) rejections.

Dependent claims 2-16 depend from independent claim 1. Therefore, each dependent claim is allowable for at least the same reasons that independent claim 1 is allowable. In addition, each of the dependent claims recite unique combinations that are neither taught nor suggested by the cited references and therefore each are also separately patentable.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

The Office Action contains other characterizations and assertions regarding the claims and the cited art with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

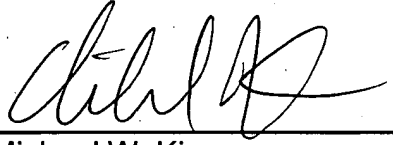
In discussing the specification and claims in this Amendment, it is to be understood that Applicants are in no way intending to limit the scope of the claims to any exemplary embodiments described in the specification or abstract and/or shown in the drawings. Rather, Applicants are entitled to have the claims interpreted broadly, to the maximum extent permitted by statute, regulation, and applicable case law.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this Amendment and
charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: June 16, 2006

By: 
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Attachments: One (1) drawing sheet marked REPLACEMENT SHEET including Fig. 2.